



# CCWRO Welfare News-2023-02

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## County Welfare Department Victims Report

• B16MG27's family of four in Los Angeles County turned in their SAR 7 on 1-22-23. Their CalFresh benefits were due on 2-7-23 but no benefits were placed on the card. After being food insecure for a week they called DPSS. After waiting for an hour they were told that DPSS discovered it had received the completed SAR-7 on 1-22-23. DPSS believed it then had three (3) business days to process the SAR -7. On 2-10-23 the family contacted DPSS again but were told their CalFresh benefits would be available on 2-13-23 – sorry.

• 1B88G66 - This homeless assistance unit of 2 parents, family of four, was terminated from CalFresh and CalWORKs on 2-1-23. 1B88G66 never received a NOA saying that her benefits would stop, yet the computer allowed termination of the case. She now has CalFresh, but no cash. Sacramento County wanted Person #1(adult) to provide verification of a bank account that closed 4 years ago. Sacramento County was demanding that the

homeless family provide verification that their bank account was closed even though the County had no evidence that Person #1 had the bank account in 2022 or 2023. Without that verification, Sacramento County has sentenced this homeless family to total destitution.

• Mr. and Mrs. 1BC9C20 of Sacramento County fled the Ukrainian Putin genocide. They were eligible for expedited services CalFresh and so, applied for CalFresh and cash aid on 10-23-22. They were interviewed on 12-2-22 and issued CalFresh benefits on 12-6-22. However, they were issued General Assistance even though they were eligible for Refugee Cash Assistance.

### CalSAWS Update - CalSAWS Gives County Welfare Directors Association \$274,560 a Year (\$22,880 a month) To Do What CWDA Already Does.

On October 21, 2022, CalSAWS Board of Directors, who are all county welfare directors, and some of whom represent the County Welfare Directors Association Board of Directors, agreed to a sweetheart deal – the folks representing CalSAWS will give the folks representing CWDA (the same folks), the amounts in **Chart #1**:

Chart # 1	
Contract Period	Amount
11-2-22 to 6-30-23	\$183,040.00
7-1-23 to 6-30-24	\$274,560.00
7-1-24 to 6-30-25	\$274,560.00

What will CWDA do with the \$732,160-97% federal and state dollars? See **Chart #2** on page 2.

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**CHART #2 - What will CWDA do for \$732,160 self-dealt to themselves from CalSAWS?**

	<b>What will CWDA do?</b>	<b>What has CWDA been doing prior to getting \$732,160 for three years?</b>
1	Provide policy support consultation to CalSAWS management, including support in understanding the priorities and needs for automation changes from the perspectives of counties, state partners, the Legislature, and other stakeholders.	CalSAWS was a creation of CWDA – member of CWDA's Board have hired the CalSAWS management. CalSAWS are the counties and all decisions made by CalSAWS have always been processed through the county perspective.
2	Provide CalSAWS with support in analyzing the impacts of proposed state budget and legislative changes, and federal policy changes, to facilitate CalSAWS' responses to requests for cost and time estimates.	CWDA has always been doing this.
3	Coordinate with CalSAWS in developing materials for key presentations and meetings, such as for Legislative briefings and hearings, conferences, and stakeholder meetings. Develop and/or edit slides and/or talking points to assist in conveying relevant project information to various audiences.	CWDA has always been doing this.
4	Facilitate the sharing of CalSAWS information through various CWDA committees and provide CalSAWS management with feedback shared in those committees, to facilitate enhanced communication between the project and counties.	CWDA has always been doing this.
5	Coordinate with CalSAWS in assessing and understanding the changes needed to respond to new program and policy initiatives, policy changes, emergencies, special projects, and assist in identifying areas where significant county operational impacts will need to be addressed	CWDA has always been doing this.
6	Participate in meetings between CalSAWS and other projects and/or workgroups and assist CalSAWS in obtaining an understanding of the implications of new/changed policies/processes for counties, customers, stakeholders, and interface partners.	CWDA has always been doing this.

7	Support CalSAWS in tracking key upcoming policy changes and following up with state partners about the requisite policy deadlines to keep implementation on target.	CWDA has always been doing this.
8	CWDA will submit to CalSAWS, by the 30th calendar day of the month following the month in which the services are provided, monthly written reports of activities performed pursuant to this Agreement.	<p>The first report from CWDA was due on December 1, 2022. The CalSAWS Status report are posted on CalSAWS. There are no CWDA posted reports. CCWRO has also asked for these reports in the CalSAWS web page link known as “Ask CalSAWS”.</p> <p>CWDA is supposed to submit a report of what they do but there is no report available to the public.</p>

### Late DSS Data Reports

Counties complain that CalWORKs and CalFresh beneficiaries sometimes fail to submit their SAR-7 reports on time. Either the county did not receive the SAR-7 or the SAR-7 they received was not complete. The SAR-7 for CalFresh and CalWORKs beneficiaries are due by the end of the reporting month. Thus, if the reporting month is December and the county does not receive the “complete” SAR-7 by December 31, then in January the family gets a Merry Christmas greeting from the county – all benefits STOP January 1- period. After being terminated in January many families cannot pay their rent, are forced to endure food insecurity or are made homeless.

Counties, on the other hand, are required to submit monthly reports for the CalWORKs, CalFresh, General Assistance, CAPI, Child Care and WtW programs by the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the next month. That means the October report is due November 15. Once the California Department of Social Services gets the complete report, it is posted on the CDSS Data portal.

CDSS often delays the posting of the county reports because the reports are incomplete or just do not make sense, however, counties continue to get their benefits. No county ends up homeless or food insecure. They just keep getting their money even if they never submit reports, or submit incomplete reports, which counties often do.

On February 18 we did a survey of the major reports. Below in **Chart #3** we found many long delays of reports. Counties should give beneficiaries the same leeway and flexible reporting schedule they grant themselves. Counties are supposed to be providing support for families. Terminating cases because of late reporting is deeply destructive.

### Chart # 3 – How many days are counties late in submitting complete reports to CDSS?

Program Late Report	Last Reported Data	How Many Days Are Counties Late?
CF 296 – CalFresh Application and Caseload Reports	August of 2022	6 months – 180 days
CA 1037 - CAPI -Immigrant Benefits for the aged, blind and disabled	September 2022	5 months – 150 days
• GR 237 – County General Assistance	September 2022	5 months – 150 days
• CA237CW – CalWORKs Application and Caseload Reports	September 2022	5 months – 150 days
• <a href="#">CA 253 CW: Cash Grant Discontinuances</a> –	September 2022	5 months – 150 days
• <a href="#">CA 255 CW: Cash Grant Denials</a> –	September 2022	5 months – 150 days
• <a href="#">WTW 25: Welfare-to-Work Activity - All (Other) Families</a> –	August of 2022	6 months – 180 days
• <a href="#">WTW 25A: Welfare-to-Work Activity - Two-Parent Families</a> -	August of 2022	6 months – 180 days
• <a href="#">CA 237 HA: Homeless Assistance</a> -	August of 2022	6 months – 180 days
• <a href="#">FSP 14: Family Stabilization</a> - July 2022	July 2022	7 months – 210 days
• <a href="#">CW 115: Child Care - CalWORKs Families</a> -	July 2022	7 months – 210 days
• <a href="#">CW 115A: Child Care - Two-Parent Families</a> -	July 2022	7 months – 210 days

## P-EBT 4.0: An Exceedingly Brief History of a COVID-19 PHE Program Now Preparing For The Next Phase (Slightly Delayed)

**P-EBT 1.0** The Pandemic-EBT (P-EBT 1.0) program provided food assistance funding for school aged children, who as of March 2020, were locked out of their public schools because of the COVID-19 public health emergency. The COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (COVID-19 PHE), national school closures meant school children no longer had ready access to free and reduced-price school meals including breakfast, lunch and in some cases after school snacks and week-end food supplement packets.

Per Food Research Action Center (FRAC), in California, the P-EBT program provided nutrition assistance funds to 3.74 million low-income school aged children and paid out \$1.36 billion in issued benefits. <https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/9-14-20fa-stateprofile-ca.pdf> The program was a success but not without its challenges and problems. Given the circumstances, an emergency implementation, poor connections between local school districts, federal and state welfare agencies, nationally and in California, this program has been a model of fortitude. P-EBT has continued since 2020 with notable adjustments as co-operative program between federal, state and local agencies.

**P-EBT 2.0**

California and other states and territories were required to submit school year-based plans to the USDA Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) for approval. California's P-EBT 2.0 program had two notable components:

(1) continuing P-EBT for School Year (SY) 2020 - 2021 for school-aged children who were eligible for the free and reduced-price meal program based on their Fall 2019 applications; and

(2) new coverage per the issuance of P-EBT individual benefits to young children from birth to age 6 who were part of a CalFresh household.

The P-EBT 2.0 program provided direct payment of nutrition supplement funds with:

- no requirement of an application for benefits;
- new P-EBT 2.0 benefits provided on individual reloadable cards for each child in a household; and
- a two-tiered payment rate based on whether a child's school was operating on an in-person schedule (\$0.00 payment), remote learning (about \$123.00) or hybrid learning (in-person and remote learning students will get about \$68.00) per month.

For P-EBT 2.0, all school aged children who qualified for free or reduced-price school meals based on their Fall 2019 application for this program, were deemed eligible for P-EBT 2.0 benefits along with children in other categories, i.e. Foster Care. CDSS chose to issue new P-EBT 2.0 cards to these children. New cards were also issued to young children eligible for the program under the new rules as well as new school enrollees (children new to a district, starting regular school, transfers).

There was a delay in the issuance of P-EBT 2.0 cards because of the high nationwide demand for generic reloadable cash transfer media. The cards were reloadable and were intended to be kept throughout the operation of the school year's P-EBT program.

CDSS published an outcome report for the P-EBT 2.0 program that showed a high level of program participation throughout the state. The agency reported serving a little more than 4 million school-aged children and a little more than 750,000 very young and pre-school aged children who were identified as members of CalFresh households. Overall, as of November 2022, through the P-EBT 2.0 program, more than \$5.1 billion was spent using these funds to meet the nutritional needs of young and school-aged California children. See <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/Portals/9/EBT/Pandemic/P-EBT%2020%20Outcomes%20Report.pdf>

**P-EBT 3.0.**

The P-EBT 3.0 program is currently operational for the 2022 – 2024 school years. This version of the program faces new challenges principally as most California's public elementary and high schools have reopened to full-time in-person learning. This was a consequence of the increased availability of effective COVID-19 vaccines for children and youth, more standardized hygiene and safety protocols and the establishment of protocols for effective on-line learning, home-schooling and similar alternative educational modalities. Critically, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture's FNS approved the California 3.0 P-EBT program with a tiered benefit payments based on public health challenges in a local community as well as individual student or family health issues. Different payment rates were established for school that were open on a regular full-time basis; on a part-time or hybrid basis or on an individualized basis if a student was unable to attend school because of quarantine or other exigencies. P-EBT 3.0 has considerable computer-based access for the public and greater co-ordination between individual schools, local welfare agencies and school districts as well as state P-EBT program staff.



**P-EBT 4.0.**

The P-EBT 4.0 program is now in development. CDSS staff conducts a monthly P-EBT program status meeting. CDSS staff have actively solicited community and local agency input in the creation of the P-EBT 4.0 plan for submission to FNS.

**The P-EBT Legacy:** Many positive ideas that have evolved out of the P-EBT program including:

***Creation of a free lunch/school meals program for all children.***

The most significant silver lining of the COVID-19 PHE for California children is that as of SY 2023-2024, school meals will be provided at no cost to all children. California among first states to create this type of program although FNS had previously created an individual school-based waiver program that allowed **all** children attending a specific Title I school sites to receive free and reduced meals. The comments included in this NPR report are compelling. See <https://www.npr.org/2021/07/20/1018267303/california-free-lunch-public-schools>; The Kone Report commissioned by the Food Research and Action Center and the Center and the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities. See <https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/P-EBT-Documents-Report.pdf>.

Choosing to take on childhood hunger is an action that has far-reaching consequences namely improving the lifelong health consequences of adequate and appropriate nutrition and leveling the playing field for learning. P-EBT responds to the loss of access to school meals as a result of the Public Health Emergency figure prominently in the January 2023 FRAC, report “Hunger Doesn’t Take A Vacation: Summer Nutrition Status Report”. [https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/Summer-Report-2022\\_final.pdf](https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/Summer-Report-2022_final.pdf). The findings and recommendations of this report deserve broader exposition and support.

While some states did explicitly link P-EBT income to SNAP payments, FNS announced in the past two months, its plan to increase (modestly) monthly SNAP payments to households with school aged children during months when public schools are not in session. If getting more funds for food to low-income families with kids is one of the silver linings from COVID-19, well how does the saying go “without rain, you don’t get flowers”. Think of it as a COVID-19 PHE unwind with intentionally good results. *For more information, contact Daphne Macklin (daphne.macklin@ccwro.org)*